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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 3 - Algeria

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03178

V.3 ALGERIA

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, Algeria hosted some 219,000 refugees composed of three major groups - Western Saharan refugees, Tuaregs and Moors from Mali and Niger, and urban refugees. Western Saharan refugees, whom the Algerian authorities estimated at some 165,000 persons, reside in the Tindouf area. Of these, some 80,000 are considered as needy refugees and receive assistance from UNHCR. The second group is composed of Tuaregs and Moors from Mali and Niger. The Algerian authorities, after a review of the figures, estimated there to be some 29,000 Malians and 21,000 persons from Niger. They are located in the southernmost part of the country. All urban refugees, comprising some 4,000 Palestinians and 67 assisted refugees of various nationalities, live in Algiers. While Palestinian refugees are generally integrated into Algerian economic and social life, the other urban refugees receive education assistance from UNHCR, mainly in the form of scholarships, to supplement grants provided by the Algerian authorities. The breakdown was as follows:

Origin	Number 31/12/92	Number 31/12/93	Per cent M F C	Location	Type of Assistance
Western Sahara	A 80,000 NA 85,000	A 80,000 NA 85,000	- - - 	Tindouf	care & maintenance
Mali	29,000	A 7,000 NA 22,000	- - - - - -	Tamanrasset, Adrar	- -
Niger	21,000	A 2,000 NA 19,000	- - - - - -	Tamanrasset, Illizi	care & maintenance
Palestine	4,000	 NA 4,000	- - - - - -	Algiers	- -
Various	250	A 67	43 39 18	Algiers	care & maintenance
Total	219,250	219,067			

A: Assisted
NA: Non-assisted

2. The great majority of the assisted Western Saharan refugees are women and children for whom special projects have been designed and implemented.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

3. During 1993, the Government of Algeria approved the establishment of a UNHCR Field Office in Tamanrasset to facilitate assistance to refugees from Mali and Niger. This Field Office became fully operational at the end of January 1994. A quadripartite agreement for the repatriation of the displaced persons from Mali is due to be signed between the Governments of Algeria and Mali, the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) and UNHCR. This agreement will define the role and responsibilities of each concerned party in the repatriation.

Programme objectives and priorities

Western Saharan refugees

4. The UNHCR programme on behalf of the Western Saharan refugees is designed to cater for their basic assistance needs pending their voluntary repatriation. To this effect, emphasis has been placed on food, transport and logistics, water and sanitation, health, community services, education, agriculture and income-generating activities, with a special focus on women and children, who represent the majority of the assisted refugee population. Given the present situation in the country, efforts are being made by UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) to establish a six-month emergency food stock in Tindouf.

Refugees from Mali and Niger

5. While the signing of the "Pacte National" in Bamako in April 1992 raised hopes for the early repatriation of Malian refugees, the situation in northern Mali has not so far offered the necessary conditions for a large-scale return. Therefore, the emphasis of the programme will be on meeting basic assistance requirements of needy refugees in Algeria until such time as voluntary repatriation becomes possible. Meanwhile, the repatriation option will be pursued. For refugees from Niger, emphasis will also be placed on meeting their basic needs in Algeria, pending the identification of a durable solution.

Urban refugees

6. Assistance will continue to be provided to a small urban caseload of refugees from different African countries, until their repatriation can be envisaged. Resettlement possibilities will be sought for a limited number of cases for whom this would be the only viable solution.

Programme delivery and administrative support costs

7. Owing to the current security situation in the country and on the basis of advice given by United Nations and UNHCR security experts, UNHCR intends to relocate to a safer building. Following the evacuation of several international staff, UNHCR will seek to improve the security conditions for the local and international staff remaining in Algeria.

8. To ensure a more effective implementation of the assistance programme in respect of the displaced persons from Mali, it is expected that administrative structures for the newly opened Field Office in Tamanrasset will be consolidated.

Arrangements for implementation related inputs

Western Saharan refugees

9. The Algerian Red Crescent (CRA) has been in charge of delivering UNHCR assistance to Western Saharan refugees since this programme was initiated in the mid-1970s. Most of the assistance materials for Western Saharan refugees are procured from outside Algeria and CRA is charged with the logistics of transporting these from the ports of Algiers and Oran to the Tindouf region. Some 10,110 metric tons of basic food supplies valued at $ 2,156,660 will be mobilized in 1994 by WFP.

10. Other organizations involved in programme implementation include Enfants Réfugiés du Monde (ERM), which is making an important contribution through the establishment of day care centres for children in the camps in Tindouf, and One World Action (OWA), which covers the agricultural sector in Tindouf. Also, in 1993, through a joint programme with the International Labour Organization (ILO), a professional training course in methodology and programme conception was designed for 15 Western Saharan refugees in Turin, Italy.

Refugees from Mali and Niger

11. With regard to refugees from Mali and Niger, the Government of Algeria is making an important contribution to the programme through the construction of four main sites known as "Centres de vie" to house the refugees. CRA implements part of the programme related to transportation and logistics, and the Algerian NGO, Fondation pour la Recherche Médicale (FOREM), is responsible for the medical and sanitary sectors. In 1994, WFP will provide 4,365 metric tons of food supplies valued at $ 1,357,680 to cover the basic food needs of refugees from Mali and Niger.

Urban refugees

12. A subsistence allowance and medical care for urban refugees is implemented directly by UNHCR.

General Programmes

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

Western Saharan refugees

13. With regard to the Western Saharan refugees, multi-sectoral assistance was provided as in the past years. One of the main problems continued to be the delays in the transportation of assistance from the ports of Algiers and Oran to the Tindouf region. As a result, distribution of food and non-food items for vulnerable persons was delayed and the planned programme implementation in respect of various sectors was affected. However, CRA has effected improvements in the organization and delivery of assistance.

Refugees from Mali and Niger

14. Non-food items, comprising domestic needs and water equipment to displaced persons from Mali and Niger, were stocked in Tamanrasset, but, at the request of the authorities, were not delivered until the "Centres de vie" were established and the scattered population regrouped.

Urban refugees

15. Assistance to refugees in urban areas was implemented as programmed. Some 100 urban refugees were assisted in terms of subsistence allowance and medical care against a planned figure of 150.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

16. In addition to basic food commodities supplied by WFP, a donation of tea is expected from the European Union in 1994 to benefit the refugees from Western Sahara, Mali and Niger.

Western Saharan refugees

17. The implementation of the care and maintenance programme for 80,000 Western Saharan refugees could encounter difficulties in 1994, in view of the prevailing situation in Algeria. Efforts are therefore being undertaken by UNHCR and WFP to establish a six-month emergency stock in Tindouf, in the event of any serious disruption occurring in the delivery of food. Multi-sectoral assistance will continue in terms of provision of supplementary food, replacement of domestic items, maintenance of water equipment and improvement of sanitation conditions. Health care will be reinforced by a contribution to hospitals of essential medical supplies and materials. As in previous years, education needs will be addressed through the provision of school supplies and materials. UNHCR will endeavour, in coordination with ERM, to develop day care centres for children and provide adequate nursing training to women refugees. OWA will assist in providing the necessary expertise to extend the existing vegetable gardens in the refugee camp sites.

Refugees from Mali and Niger

18. Assistance will be extended to 20,000 refugees (compared with 9,000 persons assisted in 1993) and will be consolidated upon the transfer of refugees to the "Centres de vie" established by the Algerian authorities in four sites: Tinzaouatine and Bordi Badji Mokhtar for the refugees from Mali, and Ain Guezzam and Taffasasset for refugees from Niger. It is expected that the transfer of the refugees to the "Centres de Vie" will take place before the end of 1994. Each of these settlements covers an area of about 20 hectares and has large warehouses, offices for administration and a health centre. UNHCR will provide supplementary food, domestic items and medical supplies to the refugee population. Water facilities will be installed in the new locations where they are not available. However, needs will have to be reassessed in coordination with the concerned authorities upon the transfer of the refugees. It is foreseen that after the signature of the quadripartite agreement, a pilot repatriation operation for some 1,200 Malian refugees will be initiated before the end of 1994, conditions in northern Mali permitting. The necessary funds to cover this operation will be requested from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation.

Urban refugees

19. Assistance in the way of subsistence allowances and medical care will be provided to some 50 urban refugees.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

Care and maintenance

20. With regard to Western Saharan refugees, the proposed allocation for 1995 takes into account the need for continued assistance to this population in the camps in the Tindouf area, pending their voluntary repatriation. However, it is to be noted that, in March 1994, the Security Council agreed that the Identification Commission of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) should proceed with the identification and registration of potential voters with a view to holding the referendum by the end of 1994. UNHCR remains ready to review its planning and budgeting for a repatriation programme within the parameters of the United Nations Peace Plan. If repatriation takes place, the 1995 care and maintenance programme will have to be reviewed accordingly.

21. Assistance will be extended in 1995 to the refugees from Mali and Niger, by which time they would have been moved to the "Centres de vie". Basic food needs will be secured by WFP, and UNHCR will provide complementary food and domestic items. Emphasis will be placed on programmes and projects to prepare the beneficiaries for voluntary repatriation. These programmes will include education activities, vocational training programmes and income-generating projects, with particular attention paid to women refugees with a view to developing skills that are required once the refugees return to their homes in Mali. Information sharing between the UNHCR Offices in Algeria and Mali should facilitate this process. FOREM will continue to provide medical assistance. In the event that repatriation becomes a viable option, care and maintenance to Malian refugees in Algeria will be adjusted accordingly.

22. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1994 and the proposed 1995 care and maintenance allocations for the Western Saharan refugees and the refugees from Mali and Niger is as follows (in US dollars):

Western Saharan refugees

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Initial 1995
Food	268,560	317,500	312,080
Transport	326,360	219,021	333,110
Domestic needs	1,605,000	1,192,100	1,212,300
Water	4,804	5,724	21,131
Sanitation	6,304	9,211	13,729
Health	432,450	482,450	705,000
Community services	0	100,000	142,000
Education	380,000	420,719	377,650
Crop production	100,000	100,000	100,000
Livestock	300,000	530,847	220,000
Income generation	60,000	60,000	0
Agency op. support	16,522	62,428	63,000
Sub-Total	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
Project Personnel	100,600	0	0
Progr. Delivery (*)	0	570,600	586,500
Total	3,600,600	4,070,600	4,086,500

(*) : The budget for Programme Delivery covers the entire caseload.

Refugees from Mali and Niger

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Initial 1995
Food	87,890	87,890	192,240
Transport	222,780	224,000	491,700
Domestic needs	272,675	148,535	900,000
Water	394,900	394,900	2,650
Health	207,325	207,829	200,000
Shelter	431,200	240,020	
Agency op.support	10,430	10,526	113,410
Total	1,627,200	1,313,700	1,900,000

In addition, assistance $ 69,000 and $ 66,700 are budgeted for assistance to urban refugees in 1994 and 1995 respectively.

Voluntary repatriation

23. In the expectation that voluntary repatriation to Mali will become possible in 1994, an initial requirement for the return of 3,000 persons is foreseen to be drawn from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation. This allocation will cover transportation of refugees to Mali, and provide for shelter and domestic kits and agricultural tools to permit their early reintegration in their country of origin. These activities will be implemented in conjunction with the UNHCR reintegration programme established for returnees in Mali. Efforts will also be made to explore the possibilities for the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Niger.

Special Programmes

Education Account

24. The proposed appropriations for 1993/1994 and 1994/1995 cover scholarships for 50 beneficiaries in 1994 and 50 in 1995. Ten student refugees are expected to graduate in 1994 and 14 in 1995. The per capita cost will increase in 1994 and 1995 in line with the increased cost of living in Algeria.

Other Trust Funds

25. A donation of food items valued at some $ 2 million is expected from the European Union during 1994 to benefit the refugees from Western Sahara, Mali and Niger.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

26. Total expenditure in 1993 was lower than expected. There were no major variations in salary costs. Expenditures under common staff costs were slightly higher than expected due to the evacuation costs of one staff member's family. On the other hand, expenditures under all other budget chapters were lower than expected due to an overall reduction in activities resulting from the events in Algeria.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

27. The total 1994 revised requirements have increased as a result of the creation under General Programmes of one post of Legal Officer in Algiers and one local post of Secretary/Accountant, both effective 1 July 1994. Consequently, costs under salaries and common-staff costs have increased. In addition, common staff costs are higher following the evacuation of all dependents from the country. Non-staff costs are lower due to restrictive travel plans under local and regional travel.

28. Given the current security situation in the country, United Nations agencies in Algiers have decided to move to safer office premises. Pending the firm relocation of office premises to a new building, and in view of the threat to international staff, UNHCR staff have moved to, and currently operate from, a hotel. The upward revision of the 1994 budget therefore includes costs for the move of the office to the hotel and also for eventual relocation to the new building. The new building will need to be modified and security equipment will have to be installed. General operating expenses are therefore also higher to take account of rental costs for the planned new premises. Previous premises were provided free of charge by the Government. The revised budget also provides for the formal establishment of a Field Office in Tamanrassat and the replacement of one vehicle at the Branch Office.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

29. The initial 1995 estimate is marginally lower than the 1994 revised requirement. Salary costs are expected to remain the same for three international staff, one national officer and eight local staff. The estimate reflects the extension of all previously approved time limited posts until 31 December 1995. Salaries and common staff costs are higher as they include entitlements for the two newly-created posts mentioned above for the entire year.

30. In view of the planned development of activities in the "Centres de Vie", increased programme monitoring in the south of the country by the staff from Algiers will involve more in-country travel. Non-staff costs in terms of local and regional travel are therefore also expected to be higher on the assumption that normal activities will be resumed by 1995. General operating expenses, however, are estimated to be lower, with the costs for the establishment of the Field Office in Tamanrassat having been met in 1994. Provisions have also been made for the replacement of the second office vehicle under the budget chapter for acquisition of furniture, equipment and vehicles.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN ALGERIA

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)	
3,766.1	5,307.8	4,882.7	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	5,466.7
3.3 a/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
–	–	570.6	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	568.5
3,769.4	5,307.8	5,453.3	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	6,035.2
328.5	294.8	57.5	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	57.2
4,097.9	5,602.6	5,510.8	TOTAL (1)	6,092.4
			SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)	
20.5	20.8	20.8	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 50 university scholarships	20.8
–	10,000.0	–	WESTERN SAHARA OPERATION	–
1,450.3	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Extra-budgetary Food	–
50.8	38.9	38.9	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	38.9
1,521.6	10,059.7	59.7	TOTAL (2)	59.7
5,619.5	15,662.3	5,570.5	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	6,152.1

a/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation